

Jim Ton reports that proposed NIRPC merger with Illinois is dead

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By KEVIN NEVERS

The merger which the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) was pushing of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is dead.

At the Chesterton Town Council's meeting Monday night, Member Jim Ton, R-1st--and last year's president of the NIRPC Executive Committee--reported that DOT has abandoned the field and will not be pursuing the merger.

The proposed merger was blasted last year, not only by Ton and NIRPC but by Indiana's and Illinois' Congressional delegations, on the ground that it would create bureaucratic quagmires in the regional transportation planning and funding process and would prove to be far worse a cure than whatever illness it was intended to fix.

Ton in particular warned last fall that a merger of NIRPC and CMAP would inevitably lead to Northwest Indiana's getting short shrift when it came to federal funding of regional and local transportation projects.

Ton expressed relief and satisfaction on Monday that the DOT has let the idea die.

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